



MAGAZINE OF THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

Airman

www.AIRMANONLINE.AF.MIL

MAY-JUNE 2010

SPECIAL
ISSUE | OPERATION
UNIFIED RESPONSE



OUR HELP
HAITI

TOTAL FORCE EFFORT



31 MAY 2010

MEMORIAL DAY



16

Off-Duty Nurse Calls in Reserve

Resourceful Air Force Reserve nurse knew just who to call when her infant patient needed more care than her volunteer organization could supply.



24

No Tower in Sight

Air Force combat controllers work from a folding table to open the skies over Haiti bringing relief supplies and workers in across the air bridge.



34

Air Force Medical: No Showers, No Beds, No Problem

Living conditions for the medical staff were not the best, but this Air Force doctor cared only about using his skills to help people in need.



20

Photo Essay: Puerto Rico National Guard

The Puerto Rico Air National Guard worked around the clock to keep supplies flowing into Haiti and help people as they were evacuated.



32

A Grain of Sand

One Airman took leave and spent his time off using his self-aid and buddy care training in a small community clinic.



38

Photo Essay: Combat Camera in Haiti

Combat camera often documents military operations. In Haiti, the photographers captured images of the devastation and Airmen delivering relief.

Airman CONTENTS

MAY-JUNE 2010

Features

12 FUELING RELIEF

Relief operations needed fuel to keep supplies flowing.

14 AN EYE ON HAITI

Global Hawk remotely piloted aircraft gathered images to guide rescue and aid delivery operations.

18 LEAVING HAITI

A total force effort made it possible for Haitian Americans to escape the devastation in Haiti.

28 DIGGING THROUGH THE RUBBLE

Pararescuemen find people trapped in the broken buildings of Port-au-Prince, Haiti.

30 GATEWAY TO RELIEF

Aerial porters provide the hands that unload a constant flow of needed relief supplies.

36 AN EAR FOR THE PEOPLE

This Airman's gift to Haitian Americans evacuated to Homestead Air Reserve Base, Fla., is an ear and his heart.

42 SAMOAN TSUNAMI

This disaster was too close to home for these Hawaiian Airmen. For one, it was her own hometown.

Departments

2 AIRMAIL

4 FRONTLINE DUTY

46 HERITAGE

48 NOTEBOOK

On the Cover

This special issue looks at many ways Airmen participated in Operation Unified Response. On the ground and in the air, Airmen answered the cry for help.

illustration and design by
G. Patrick Harris



COMMENTS

Got something to say about Airman? Write us at airman@dma.mil, or visit www.AIRMANonline.af.mil, to share views with fellow readers.



JANUARY-FEBRUARY ISSUE

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On Feb., 11, while awaiting evaluation at the 31st Medical Group Hospital in Aviano, Italy, I read a copy of your January-February 2010 edition.

Congratulations, the entire publication was very informative, professional and gave me a positive insight to our modern United States Air Force, my alma mater; having served from 1953-1974 when I retired.

An excerpt from a letter sent by mail.

Retired Master Sgt. Oscar W. Dreikorn
Aviano, Italy

Absolutely Incredible!

Greg Williams
San Diego, Calif.



A WALK TO REMEMBER



This article hit me like a ton of bricks. [March-April 2010] I have not been in actual combat but I have served proudly in Afghanistan as a munitions troop. As I was reading about the support the awesome young men were getting along the way, I started to tear up. The 12 Airmen not only walked for Staff Sgt. Tim Davis and the other 12 special tactics Airmen who were killed, they walked for all of the brave men and women who have given the ultimate sacrifice for their country. Great job guys!

Master Sgt. Bryan K. Kelley
Aircraft Munitions Superintendent
12th Air Force
Davis-Monthan AFB, Ariz.

PHOTOGRAPHY INFORMATION

Hello, I was wondering who takes the photographs for your magazine now that the still photography career field is gone. I notice in your latest issue [January-February 2010]

you have a civilian and three enlisted folks listed as the photographers. I am an amateur photographer in my off time and was wondering if it was possible for someone like myself to take pictures for your magazine one day. Probably not, but I was just wondering how these enlisted folks got such a sweet gig. Thank you very much for your time!

via email

Alan Robinson

Editor's note: The photography career field is not gone. There is still a combat camera and a photographer track at the Defense Information School.

We do accept submissions of photos from the field for areas like Front Line Duty and the Final Frame. Most of those come from Airmen around the world.

EXPERIMENTAL EXPLOSIVES

This article [January-February 2010] is very well written with a lot of great information. However, some names were messed up. The Senior Airmen listed, Kevin Matthews and Scott Hutchinson for the picture on page 26, are actually Senior Airman Justin Mathews and Senior Airman William Hutchinson.

Justin Mathews
Eglin AFB, Fla.

Very well written article and I liked the info on test stages before drop tests are performed.

David Rairdan
Lackland AFB, Texas

AIRMAN

Randy, [Notebook - January-February 2010] I am so glad that you are with Airman magazine. Keep up the good work and drop in and see us in Alabama sometime.

Belinda Bazinet
Maxwell AFB, Ala.

Thank you so much for the planners and the magazine. I received them yesterday. From what I see so far, the magazine is more professional than when I was in the service. Keep up the good work.

Leo A Boyle III
Reprinted from the Airman magazine fan page on facebook

AIRCRAFT CANNIBALS



This is a great story. [January-February 2010] I've driven by the facility a zillion times and always wondered what happened in what my brother, a former Air Force public affairs officer, called the boneyard.

Carol
Scottsdale, Ariz.

OUR HELP HAITI TOTAL FORCE EFFORT

Airman readers,

You may notice this special issue of *Airman* is a little different. As Operation Unified Response is one of the largest humanitarian support missions the U.S. has undertaken recently, we wanted to bring you a variety of stories of Airmen doing their part. While we could not cover every individual or even every unit involved, we tried to include stories from a range of people performing their jobs to take care of our Caribbean neighbors. These glimpses into O.U.R. are both personal and heartfelt.

It was nearly 5 p.m. Jan. 12 when the magnitude 7.0 earthquake ripped through the capital city of Port-au-Prince, about 16 miles from the epicenter, and continued to rumble and roll beneath the countryside, toppling buildings and crumbling infrastructure. It was estimated that 250,000 residences and 30,000 commercial buildings had collapsed

or were severely damaged, including the President's palace and National Assembly building.

An estimated three million people were affected by the quake; the Haitian Government reported that between 217,000 and 230,000 people died, an estimated 300,000

were injured, and an estimated one million were left homeless.

Many countries responded to appeals for humanitarian aid, pledging funds and dispatching rescue and medical teams, engineers and support personnel. Joint efforts of the U.S. military brought thousands of Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines to the area.

Devastation hampered rescue and aid efforts, damaging communication systems, air, land and sea transport facilities, hospitals, and electrical networks. Confusion over governance, air traffic congestion, and problems with prioritization of flights further complicated early relief work. Aftershocks continued to plague workers and citizens for weeks after the initial tremor.

Among the first to respond was the U.S. Air Force. The 1st Special Operations Wing opened the airfield at Toussaint L'Ouverture International Airport Jan. 13. Air Force Combat Controllers were instrumental in

opening the gateway for relief workers and supplies to flood in across the air bridge. Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance assets were used early on to determine the extent of damage and the best points to channel aircraft and ships loaded with relief supplies.

Air Force efforts in Phase One of the operation, ending Jan. 30, included 2,075 sorties flown, 1,720 landing zone drops, 396 medical evacuation flights and totaled 1,182.3 tons of cargo delivered.

In Phase 2, (through March 5) the Air Force provided continuing support, including controlling 3,334 Joint Task Force-Haiti sorties, of which 458 were strategic airlift sorties. Airmen were also responsible for the evacuation of 21,000 American citizens, recovery of the remains of 31 Americans lost in the tragedy and provided critical training and equipment necessary for Haitian control of the airspace to resume. With operations slowing, by March 15 sorties totaled 4,019 with 18,194 tons of cargo delivered.

As a member of the world community, the U.S. answers many calls for support when nature rains down havoc. We have also included a story on Tsunami Relief in Samoa last year and a photo from the late-breaking relief operations in Chile in the Final Frame on the back cover.

We hope this special issue conveys some of the dedication and tenacity with which our Airmen approach every mission.

James B. Pritchett
Editor In Chief

Airman

Official magazine of the U.S. Air Force
May-June 2010, Volume LIV, Number 4

Secretary of the Air Force
U.S. Air Force Chief of Staff
Director of Air Force Public Affairs
Commander DMA - San Antonio
Deputy for Public Affairs Operation
Chief, Print and Web

Michael B. Donley
Gen. Norton Schwartz
Col. Les Kodlick
Col. Clifton Douglas Jr.
Jeffrey L. Whitted
Dick Hodgson

AIRMAN STAFF

Editor In Chief
Managing Editor
Associate Editor
Senior Staff Writer

James B. Pritchett
Colleen McGee
Randy Roughton
Staff Sgt. J. Paul Croxon

DESIGN STAFF

Design Director
Deputy Design Director
Production Manager

G. Patrick Harris
Luke Borland
Andrew Yacenda

CONTRIBUTORS

Copy Editor
Copy Editor
Contributing Writer

Steve Richards
Janie Santos
Tech. Sgt. Steve German

PHOTOJOURNALISM

Chief, Photo
Photojournalist
Photojournalist
Photojournalist

Master Sgt. Jack Braden
Lance Cheung
Staff Sgt. Bennie J. Davis III
Staff Sgt. Desiree N. Palacios

ABOUT AIRMAN

Airman is published bimonthly by the Defense Media Activity for the Secretary of the Air Force Office of Public Affairs. As the official magazine of the U.S. Air Force, it is a medium of information for Air Force personnel. Readers may submit articles, photographs and artwork. Suggestions and criticisms are welcome. All pictures are U.S. Air Force photos unless otherwise identified. The opinions of contributors are not necessarily those of the Air Force.

EDITORIAL OFFICE

Airman, DMA-San Antonio, 203 Norton St., San Antonio, TX 78226-1848
Telephone 210-925-7757; DSN 945-7757, fax 210-925-7219; DSN 945-7219
E-mail: airman@dma.mil

LOOK US UP

www.AIRMANonline.af.mil

For more news see the Air Force's official World Wide Web home page at www.af.mil

FOR A UNIT SUBSCRIPTION

Administrative support offices can send the unit's mailing address and the total number of military and civilian Air Force people assigned via e-mail to distro.airman@dma.mil to start receiving copies on a regular basis.

DISTRIBUTION

One copy for every three Airmen and civilian workers.

FOR A PERSONAL SUBSCRIPTION

Call toll free 1-866-512-1800; or fax 202-512-2250 for subscription cost.
Pay-by-phone orders are processed from 8 a.m.-4 p.m. Eastern time.
For information, write: Superintendent of Documents,
P.O. Box 371954, Pittsburgh, PA 15250-7954

Frontline

Duty

AROUND THE AIR FORCE IN PICTURES

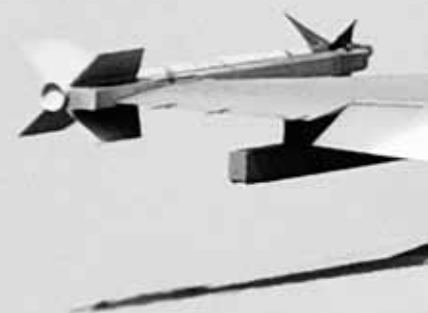
This issue took a look at some of the ways Airmen stepped up to help people after a disaster. While those relief missions were in full swing, the operations of today's Air Force continued without pause.

The Airmen of today many jobs in the air and on the ground. They show their core values in everything they do, from training to recreation and while completing daily tasks at home and around the globe.

In these images you'll see current and future Airmen going about their business as usual with integrity first, service before self and excellence in all they do. The images here are a glimpse into the everyday lives of Airmen from the commemoration of the first military flight to some behind-the-scenes views of the diverse jobs they do in service to our nation.

We welcome your comments and hope you'll send us photos for consideration in future issues. Send your feedback to airman@dma.mil

— Airman Staff





COPE WITH THIS During Cope North, an F-16 Fighting Falcon takes off to play as an aggressor. The U. S. Air Force and Japan's Air Self-Defense Force conduct the exercise annually at Andersen Air Force Base, Guam. The joint training is designed to increase combat readiness and interoperability. The aircraft is assigned to the 18th Aggressor Squadron at Eielson AFB, Alaska.

photo by STAFF SGT. ANDY M. KIN



HEAT WAVES

photo by AIRMAN 1ST CLASS BRETT CLASHMAN

A B-1 Lancer assigned to the 7th Operations Group at Dyess Air Force Base,

Texas, departs for a training mission at Red Flag. Red Flag is a combat training exercise involving air forces of the United States and its allies. It is conducted on the 15,000-square-mile Nevada Test and Training Range, north of Las Vegas.



SPARKS FLY

photo by AIRMAN 1ST CLASS ANTHONY JENNINGS

A welder works on the steel frame of a conference center walkway canopy

being repaired at Eglin Air Force Base, Fla.



ICE CARVING

photo by AIRMAN 1ST CLASS CHRISTOPHER GROSS

Tech. Sgt. William Stewart drills through the ice with an auger during Ice

Operations at Six-Mile Lake on Elmendorf Air Force Base, Alaska. Members of the 611th Civil Engineer Squadron, Coast Guard and the Navy train together for surface and under-the-ice spill clean up.





TRUE WINGMEN F-16 Fighting Falcons assigned to the Texas Air National Guard's 149th Fighter Wing at Lackland Air Force Base, fly alongside a KC-135 Stratotanker assigned to the Iowa Air National Guard's 185th Air Refueling Wing from Sioux City, Iowa.

photo by TECH. SGT. RENE CASTILLO



AT ARM'S LENGTH Staff Sgt. Blake Lundstrom holds a 40mm grenade at arm's length. He is the explosive ordnance disposal team lead with the 633rd Civil Engineer Squadron at Langley Air Force Base, Va.

photo by STAFF SGT. BARRY LOO



UNDER THE HOOD Tech. Sgt. Damien Moody inspects a Humvee engine at Ali Base, Iraq. He is a vehicle maintenance technician with the 407th Expeditionary Logistics Readiness Squadron deployed from Eglin Air Force Base, Fla.

photo by STAFF SGT. MIGUEL LARA III



HANDS ON An Air Force ROTC cadet reassembles an M16A2 rifle during a weapons familiarization class at Goodfellow Air Force Base, Texas. The 17th Training Wing hosted cadets from Detachment 847 at Angelo State University in San Angelo, Texas, for two days. They experienced classroom and field training, and a deployment exercise.

photo by MASTER SGT. RANDY MALLARD

» CENTENNIAL WINGS

photo by STAFF SGT. BENNIE J. DAVIS III

Don Gum, a Wright "B" Flyer pilot, taxis the "Yellow Bird" down the Fort

Sam Houston, Texas, parade ground during a reenactment of the first military flight in America a century ago. The day's events honored the first flight of Signal Corps Aircraft No. 1.



» TALK THE TALK

photo by SENIOR AIRMAN TIFFANY TROJCA

Staff Sgt. Abraham Rodriguez (left) comforts a crying Chilean child at the

expeditionary hospital in Angol, Chile. Sergeant Rodriguez is a translator for more than 80 members of the Air Force Expeditionary Medical Support Team. He deployed from the Defense Institute for Medical Operations at the Air Force School of Aerospace Medicine at Brooks City-Base, Texas.

» CAN STAND THE HEAT

photo by TECH. SGT. SHELLEY GILL

Firefighters from the 125th Fighter Wing at Jacksonville, Fla., and 71st Fighter

Wing at Langley Air Force Base, Va., fight a fire in the Combat Readiness Training Center burn pit in Savannah, Ga. The burn pit helps make scenarios realistic during training for the intensity of fighting aircraft fires.





◀ **LAST BLOCK** In his last regular-season game, Falcon senior goalie Andrew Volkening guards the goal as the Falcons beat the Sacred Heart Pioneers, 8-1, at the U.S. Air Force Academy's Cadet Ice Arena. The victory clinched third place in the Atlantic Hockey Association, improving to 14-14-6 overall and 14-8-6 in the AHA.
photo by MIKE KAPLAN



◀ **EXHAUSTING JOB** Staff Sgt. Christopher Matthews a 52nd Component Maintenance Squadron aerospace propulsion systems craftsman, inspects an F-16 Fighting Falcon exhaust nozzle at Spangdahlem Air Base, Germany. Once it passes a quality assurance check, it can be installed.
photo by AIRMAN 1ST CLASS NICK WILSON



NIGHT CHECK

photo by TECH. SGT. MICHAEL R. HOLZWORTH

Airman 1st Class Albert Sarroca completes a pre-flight check before an F-16

Fighting Falcon night training mission at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev. Airman Sarroca is a crew chief with the 20th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron from Shaw AFB, S.C.



INTO HIS JOB

photo by STAFF SGT. ANDY M. KIN

Staff Sgt. John League does a post flight check on a B-52 Stratofortress after a mission in

support of Exercise Cope North at Andersen Air Force Base, Guam. Sergeant League deployed from Barksdale AFB, La.



BUSINESS SUIT

photo by NAN WYLIE

Firefighter Staff Sgt.

Jeremy Luedtke dons his protective gear to take part in an emergency response exercise on Travis Air Force Base, Calif.





BLUE LIGHT SPECIAL Airman
photo by SENIOR AIRMAN TIFFANY TROJCA | Hector Chacon performs a liquid penetrant inspection at the base non-destructive inspection shop at Holloman Air Force Base, N.M. This inspection checks the integrity of non-magnetic aircraft metal parts. Airman Chacon is a non-destructive inspection specialist with the 49th Maintenance Squadron.



STRAIGHT UP An F-16 Fighting Falcon
photo by STAFF SGT. JACOB N. BAILEY | pilot conducts an unrestricted vertical climb from Andersen Air Force Base, Guam, during Exercise Cope North. The U.S. Air Force and the Japan Air Self-Defense Force conduct the exercise annually at Andersen to increase combat readiness and interoperability.

FUELING RELIEF

RESERVE AIRMEN GIVE 'LEGS' TO OPERATION UNIFIED RESPONSE

STORY BY STAFF SGT. J. PAUL CROXON

Senior Master Sgt. Rod McClary wasn't surprised his phone was ringing. On alert for the Northern Tanker Task Force, or TTF, and already in his billeting room, he was waiting on the call for his next mission. A few times each month he travels to Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, N.J., and waits for a phone call like this telling when, not if, he's to do the business at hand. In the world of aerial refueling, business is good.

"Being on TTF, normally they put you on a reserve line," he said. "A reserve line is normally seven straight days. Any time during that period you can get a call and have to be airborne within three hours."

A day's mission aboard the Air Force's largest refueling platform, the KC-10 Extender, could take him thousands of miles in any direction. This day's mission was no different, but the missions of the receivers he refueled were. They were supporting relief operations in Haiti and needed enough fuel to get in and out of the damaged airport. When he got to the squadron he still didn't know where the mission was headed.

"Normally, TTF gets a tasking from higher headquarters that says, 'we have a mission going out to wherever,'" the boom operator said. "When we did this Haiti mission, I didn't know we were actually going to do that. They just told us it was a really long mission."

"This particular mission was scheduled

for seven hours," he said. "It took us a couple of hours to get down to the Haiti track. Once we got down there, we orbited for about three hours."

While circling above Haiti, the crew waits for receivers to come to them. On this mission, Sergeant McClary said he refueled two aircraft, both EC-130s, that couldn't complete their missions without aerial refueling. It was during the refueling that he heard what Haiti was like on the ground.

"One of the ECs was going in and one was coming out of Haiti," he recalled. "The one that was going in was carrying water and medical supplies. I actually talked to the pilot on the radio and he told me that. The one that was coming out, they had been on the ground maybe an hour and dropped off some troops."

Though Sergeant McClary could talk to the crew over the radio, he used a communication tool, like an intercom, called a boom interphone. It creates a direct communication line between the tanker and receiver without broadcasting it over already congested airwaves. Through it he was able to talk to the EC-130 pilots and have an open conversation about what they saw.

"I did get a sense of the chaos that was going on in Haiti," Sergeant McClary said. "One of the aircraft had a female pilot and she put it into words best because you could hear her voice cracking. She said, 'I've never seen anything like that in my entire life.'

That basically summed it up right there. She's special operations so she's used to seeing stuff and this was the worst."

Sergeant McClary said the tanker mission can make him feel removed from the ground operation. The KC-10 typically returns to home station without landing at an operational location. However, he said the conversations with receivers remind him of the need for aerial refueling and how it allows airlift to bring larger than normal payloads into the country.

"Our whole thing deals with the weight," he said, adding that every airframe has a maximum take-off weight. "You have a combination between cargo and fuel. You can't have max of both because you won't be able to take off."

Sergeant McClary explained how aircraft can take off with a maximum cargo load but must sacrifice with a lighter fuel load.

"Once you get off the ground and you know you're going to be refueled, you can take off with minimum fuel and a tanker will top you off. Once you're in the air, you can go to your aircraft's structural max weight," Sergeant McClary said.

He said the EC-130s flying into Haiti held heavy cargo loads. These aircraft needed to be topped off to make it back to Florida. For the receivers, it's good to know there's a fueling station in the air just off the coast.

The KC-10 can fly up to 11,500 miles and

the smaller KC-135 Stratotanker is able to fly more than 11,000 miles. He also said Air National Guard and the Air Force Reserve conduct the bulk of aerial refueling.

According to Lt. Col. Bill Harkins, a KC-10 pilot with the 78th ARS, and the pilot on the first aerial refueling mission in support of Haiti operations, Reservists working for the TTF are primarily responsible for refueling aircraft taking people and cargo to Iraq and Afghanistan.

"Having tankers on continuous call gives command a lot of flexibility that paid off during this crisis," he said.

"I got the call at around (midnight)," he said. "My crew was the first to give gas to a receiver. The first receiver was an MC-130 coming out of Haiti. He needed fuel to make it to his final destination. When we were done with the first receiver, we were getting ready to head home because our other scheduled receiver had a change of destination and didn't require fuel. However, another 130 was coming in who desperately needed fuel. We ended up giving them gas inbound to Haiti."

According to Colonel Harkins, this flexibility was crucial in the early days when aerial refueling was the only option.

"Without aerial refueling, a lot of aircraft, like the C-130s, couldn't make it to their final destination," he said. "They rely on having a tanker orbiting around waiting to refuel them." 🦅



Getting aircraft fuel
on the ground in Haiti was almost impossible. Aerial refueling was the perfect solution to keeping the humanitarian air bridge moving. It also allowed Air Force heavy lifters to carry more cargo in each load because they could top off the fuel in flight.

AN EYE ON HAITI

GLOBAL HAWK IMAGES HELP DIRECT RELIEF EFFORTS

STORY BY RANDY ROUGHTON

From thousands of miles away, Capt. Kyle Blaikie had an eye focused on earthquake-ravaged Haiti. The eye, on board the RQ-4 Global Hawk he was flying remotely from Beale Air Force Base, Calif., provided images showing the areas most in need of attention. The information provided by the RQ-4 was invaluable not only to the US military personnel across the services responding to the crisis but also the host of international aid organizations helping in the Haitian effort.

"It feels good to know that the imagery the Global Hawk community collected directly impacted the relief workers and first responders on the ground," Captain Blaikie said. "Without the Global Hawk imagery, nobody knows how difficult and drawn-out relief response would have been and how much more the Haitian people would have suffered. It felt great knowing I had a hand in making the overall relief efforts more efficient and knowing the Air Force is using cutting-edge technology in humanitarian relief efforts and supporting first responders."

Similar 9th Reconnaissance Wing missions supported Southern California wildfire response, but this was the first time Global Hawk was used for disaster relief operations in

the Caribbean, said Col. Bradley G. Butz, vice wing commander of the 480th Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance Wing at Langley AFB, Va. Forty-five pilots and 45 sensor operators from the 12th Reconnaissance Squadron guided six Global Hawk missions over Haiti and produced about 2,600 images, said Capt. Gary Toroni, the squadron's operations flight commander. These images proved crucial in pinpointing areas where people needed help. They also assisted American troops and international aid workers by showing areas that were safe to enter. Image analysts looked at the condition of airfields, bridges, railways, roads and seaports to make sure aid arrived via safe entry points.

Global Hawk Airmen were eager to help. After the earthquake made international news, Captain Toroni started getting calls from Beale Airmen asking if they could help.

"The dynamics of assisting the warfighters on the ground in Afghanistan and Iraq has its own place, but it was special to be able to

come together with all of these other agencies at a moment's notice," Captain Toroni said. "Global Hawk doing this type of mission kind of expands our footprint into what we can accomplish. For Beale Air Force Base, that's

huge, to not only be combat and security oriented, but also to have this evolution to more humanitarian assistance."

Missions normally take 45 to 90 days to plan. But 12th RS mission planner Greg Gustafson prepared the

Haiti plan in less than 12 hours. The aircraft was on its way 24 hours after the earthquake.

The Global Hawk flew to Naval Air Station Patuxent River, Md., where it was based during Haiti operations. The mission also depended on 200 maintenance specialists, Captain Blaikie said.

"It wasn't just the pilots, but also the maintainers, wing leadership and contractors," he said. "It took our entire base."

Images from Global Hawk were processed two ways. In about 12 minutes, images could be enhanced so analysts could tell host

nation officials they were seeing a crack in the highway instead of a shadow on the image, Captain Toroni said. With the other method, analysts produced a raw image that was available in a couple of minutes.

These images were valuable in guiding pilots to safe landing areas. The destruction was shocking, even to Global Hawk pilots who had seen combat damage.

"I would say what we saw from the images could be compared to seeing imagery of battle damage assessment," Captain Toroni said. "There were buildings that looked like a bomb had gone off inside them. They were pretty extreme."

"When I was able to see some of the imagery, I began to feel like I was actually helping the larger humanitarian relief mission," Captain Blaikie said. "I didn't realize that on the first mission, but it hit home that we were actually directly supporting what was going on. A lot of times we were taking pictures of the highways so Marines and Soldiers could travel across with certain trucks. They were the people who were actually going in to provide relief. We were just there to provide any support from the Global Hawk we were able to give them."

The eye on Haiti helped keep people safe as they brought aid to Haiti. ♡





An Air Force Combat
Controller checks over
a map during Operation
Unified Response.
Air Force Combat
Controllers and Army
Pathfinders conducted
drop zone surveys for
future air delivery sites.

**(Opposite) Maps for
getting** supplies safely
to those who needed
them were made using
images generated
by remotely piloted
aircraft.

OFF-DUTY NURSE CALLS IN RESERVE

RESOURCEFUL RESERVE NURSE TRIES TO SAVE A LIFE IN HAITI

STORY BY LT. COL. LESLIE PRATT

Col. Paulette Schank knew she had to do something. Two-and-a-half-month-old Frantz Andy Saintus was gasping for breath, in need of immediate care. He had survived a devastating earthquake in Haiti and the Air Force Reservist did not want breathing complications to take his life now.

In her civilian career, the colonel is a nurse anesthetist and was working in Haiti as a volunteer with Global Health Ministry. Her group supported the Canadian Navy Triage Center in Jacmel, Haiti. Jacmel is in the mountains, a long drive from Port-au-Prince, where chances of getting advanced care were better.

Colonel Schank and her team performed emergency lifesaving surgery in harsh conditions to treat the baby's incarcerated umbilical hernia. Without surgery, the blood supply would have been cut off and organ failure would follow.

The surgery was a success. Post-surgery care was administered in an improvised neonatal intensive-care isolette, which Colonel Schank and her team hastily constructed from boxes. His condition suddenly changed when the baby began suffering from pulmonary edema, a condition that began filling his lungs with fluid.

**IT'S REALLY AMAZING
WHAT ALL WAS DONE
TO MAKE THIS HAPPEN.
IT SHOWS THE VALUE
WE PLACE ON LIFE
AND WHAT WE CAN DO
AS A TEAM. — COLONEL SCHANK**

This required a level of care, supplies and equipment the team couldn't provide. Colonel Schank, who commands the 514th Aerospace Medical Squadron at McGuire Air Force Base, N.J., used a cell phone to call her wing commander, Col. Jim Kerr for help.

"It was life critical and the infant only had seven hours of oxygen left," Colonel Kerr said, "I looked at my clock and saw it was 1:30 a.m. and that meant the infant would need the oxygen by 8:30 a.m."

The request moved from McGuire to the Air Force Reserve Command Crisis Action Team at Robins AFB, Ga., to the Air Force CAT in the Pentagon.

"To see all these people step up and pull off a pretty complex communication and transportation challenge like this was absolutely remarkable," Colonel Schank said.

Early the next day, she was on a helicopter with the infant on the way to the USNS Comfort medical treatment facility. With only a half hour of crucial medical oxygen remaining, she was able to deliver the baby to the ship's intensive care unit.

Following the life-saving flight, she returned to Jacmel to work in the operating room.

"It was absolutely amazing," Colonel Schank said. "Without everyone, from the stateside command post controllers to the USNS Comfort crews, being resourceful and creative, we could have never pulled this off as quickly as we did. That speed was critical because we'd exhausted our oxygen supply."

"This experience solidified how important it is to work as a team," Colonel Kerr said, "It's really amazing what all was done to make this happen. It shows the value we place on life and what we can do as a team."

"I've never been so proud to be part of the American military team," Colonel Schank said. "I felt kind of helpless at first, but when I dialed in my boss at McGuire, I was quickly reminded that I'm not alone, but rather part of something much bigger."

EDITOR'S NOTE: Sadly, Frantz Andy Saintus died Feb. 1. ♡

Patients are treated outdoors in a makeshift hospital at St. Michael Hospital in Jacmel, Haiti. Jacmel is located on the southern coast of Haiti with a population of about 50,000. Hospital facilities were destroyed by the earthquake. About 350 people lost their lives in Jacmel and thousands were injured, according to officials on the scene. Volunteers included people like Air Force Reserve nurse Col. Paulette Schank.

LEAVING HAITI

TOTAL FORCE CREWS SUPPORT OPERATION UNIFIED RESPONSE IN HAITI

STORY BY MASTER SGT. STEVE STAEDLER



One look into Marvin Jeannis' eyes showed just how tired he was.

Holding his father's hand, the little boy wearing an orange shirt and a designer cap a few sizes too big walked up the ramp of an Air Force C-17 Globemaster III. His eyes squinted momentarily as they adjusted to the brightly lit interior. After finding his seat, Marvin and the other seven children on board were given teddy bears to help provide comfort for the two-hour flight from Port-au-Prince, Haiti, to Orlando, Fla.

An Airman helped secure his seatbelt and his father's. The Airman flashed the boy a thumbs-up, and Marvin responded in turn with a smile.

"We're glad you're here," said the boy's father, Jean Jeannis.

Although the 1 1/2-year-old boy probably didn't realize the significance this flight would have on his life, his father certainly understood.

"We are so happy to see the Air Force and what you are giving to us," he said. "My son and I are very grateful to you."

The boy and his father and most of the other 14 passengers were fast asleep as the aircraft taxied for takeoff. Just before 3 a.m., the C-17 lifted off, banked left and headed toward Florida. The passengers

were about to embark on the next, and perhaps, a more promising, chapter in their lives. Less than five minutes later, the remaining few passengers who stayed awake for takeoff were asleep.

AIRMEN ANSWERING THE CALL

This late-night flight was just one of hundreds flown in and out of Haiti by Air Force active-duty, Reserve and Guard Airmen since the Jan. 12 earthquake. Pope Air Force Base, N.C., served as one of the major staging areas for transporting troops and supplies into the country. In the first 11 days after the earthquake, Airmen assigned to Pope airlifted nearly 2,900 Soldiers and more than 2,700 tons of cargo and equipment to Haiti in support of Operation Unified Response.

The C-17 and the smaller C-130 Hercules provided the majority of the airlift muscle, with flight crews from bases throughout the United States operating out of the North Carolina base. A Reserve crew from the 317th Airlift Squadron at Charleston AFB, S.C., flew these 16 Haitians to Florida in a Travis AFB, Calif.-based C-17.

The night before Marvin and his father boarded the aircraft, the C-17 carried more than 80,000 pounds of cargo, namely three U.S. Army medium tactical vehicles, a generator and water purification equipment; a few civilian contractors

and a reporter into Haiti.

Since Toussaint L'Ouverture International Airport in Port-au-Prince is small with limited parking ramps, arriving aircraft often had to circle above waiting for space on the ground to open up before landing. The inbound C-17 circled for a while before touching down in Haiti just after midnight.

Operating with very little ramp lighting, Staff Sgts. Gus Morse and Stephen Pinkerton, loadmasters from Air Force Reserve Command's 317th AS, worked with their Army passengers to unload the vehicles and equipment in less than 15 minutes. The two then set up seats and prepped the aircraft for outbound passengers.

Shortly after 2 a.m., 16 Haitians — eight adults and eight children — many of whom are U.S. citizens, boarded the aircraft. Before departure, Sergeant Morse handed out foam earplugs to his passengers. He assisted one woman, who came onboard in a wheelchair, with her earplugs, ensured they were properly inserted and that she was comfortable.

"I volunteered for these missions. I just wanted to help out in any way I can," Sergeant Morse said. "For us, some have a little more meaning than others. This is probably going to be one of them."

"I think all of us on this crew

volunteered to do this because we wanted to do something meaningful," said Sergeant Pinkerton.

One boy, who looked to be about 6, lay down across his seat with his head in his father's lap. Not wanting to wake his son, the father took an extra set of ear plugs and put just one into his little boy's exposed ear.

Shortly after takeoff the yellow foam plug popped out of the boy's ear and landed on the floor. It didn't seem to matter much as he slept through the two-hour flight, much of it in the comfort of his father's lap.

The flight touched down at Orlando's Sanford Airport about 5 a.m. and was met by immigration and border control agents. The 16 Haitians were escorted off the aircraft and greeted by a gray, rainy Florida sky.

After processing in Orlando, Jeannis said he and his son planned to move to the Miami area, reunite with his wife and get a job driving a taxi. The only injury Jeannis had from the earthquake was a two-inch cut above his right eye from a piece of debris that fell from his house; his son wasn't injured because he was playing outside at the time.

"We're all friends here," Jeannis said of the other passengers. "I'm just looking forward to going to Miami and starting over." 🐦

ERTURE

photo by Master Sgt. Jeremy Lock



U.S. citizens wait
to be evacuated from
Toussaint L'Ouverture
International Airport,
Port Au Prince, Haiti.
Evacuees were flown to
Homestead Air Reserve
Base, Fla., which served
as one embarkation
point for American
evacuees.



PUERTO RICO NATIONAL GUARD

PHOTOS BY STAFF SGT. DESIREE N. PALACIOS





AIRMAN



AIRMAN



AIRMAN



(Main) A C-130E Hercules aircraft carrying Haitian Americans lands in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

(Left to Right) Airmen from the 35th Expeditionary Airlift Squadron in Muniz, Puerto Rico, load relief cargo onto a C-130E Hercules bound for Port-au-Prince.

Aerial porters spend hundreds of hours pushing pallets from K-loaders to cargo holds.

Airmen work around the clock supporting relief efforts.

Cargo haulers line up to deliver pallets of relief supplies to waiting aircraft.

Each C-130E can carry six pallets.

Spotters watch as each pallet is pushed from a loader to the aircraft floor. The floor is equipped with rollers allowing pallets to be easily moved into position.

Because much of the Haitian infrastructure was destroyed, bottled water was a key component of relief supplies.

(Clockwise) U.S. citizens, who were in Haiti, wait to board an Air Force C-130 Hercules at the Puerto Rico Air National Guard's 156th Airlift Wing dining facility.

Col. Carlos Quinones assists a U.S. citizen off of a C-130E Hercules that landed in San Juan, Puerto Rico. Colonel Quinones is the 156th Wing commander.

Evacuees included Haitian Americans, tourists and children traveling to adoptive families.

An Airman helps passengers as they walk down the ramp of a C-130 on a rainy day during airlift operations.





(Clockwise) Many of the evacuees were tired from the long trip and Puerto Rico Air National Guard Airmen were on hand to help them from the aircraft to the bus.

To this passenger, everything was new.

Some passengers needed extra care and medical staff were on hand when they arrived.

Most of the passengers continued their journey after the brief stop in Puerto Rico. For them, Homestead Air Reserve Base, Fla., was the next destination.



NO TOWER IN SIGHT

AIR FORCE COMBAT CONTROLLERS WORK FROM A FOLDING TABLE TO OPEN THE SKY ABOVE HAITI

STORY BY STAFF SGT. J. PAUL CROXON

A magnitude 7.0 earthquake rocked Port-au-Prince, Haiti, and its surroundings. The quake toppled hundreds of structures; homes, businesses and schools were flattened. The bricks, rocks and mortar that once supported them now spilled into the street. The scene was overwhelming, and from the air looked as if the buildings were made from toy blocks scattered by the tantrum of a giant toddler. Instead, the devastated dwellings and other structures marked an inconceivable change in the lives of millions of people.

One important building, the control tower, still stood, but quake damage made it useless at a time when the work once done inside was critical. Without controllers at the capital city's airport, vital support and relief could not fly in.

It is the people, the air controllers, providing a voice to the pilot, feeding information necessary for a safe landing. With the tower destroyed, that voice

entered the airwaves from an Airman at a folding table beside the flightline and it belonged to an Air Force combat controller. When the country's air infrastructure was damaged, these Airmen were on the ground within hours, talking to pilots and enabling the delivery of aid across an air

**ONE OF OUR PRIMARY
JOBS IS TO TAKE OVER
AND SET UP AN AIRFIELD
IN AN AUSTERE
ENVIRONMENT AND
PROVIDE AIR TRAFFIC
CONTROL FOR
FOLLOW-ON AIRCRAFT**

— STAFF SGT. JOSHUA CRAIG

bridge built by hundreds of military and civilian aircraft from countries around the world.

"One of our primary jobs is to take over and set up an airfield in an austere environment and provide air traffic control for follow-on aircraft," said Staff Sgt. Joshua

Craig, a combat controller from the 23rd Special Tactics Squadron. "This is really just the same except we're not getting shot at."

Sergeant Craig and his fellow combat controllers stand out in Haiti. Even among the various uniforms from every service, multiple countries and the rainbow of relief workers, their island of folding tables and all-terrain vehicles between the runway and taxiway is hard to miss. That island was set up shortly after the quake hit Haiti and since then Toussaint L'Ouverture International Airport has been transformed.

"In the initial days there were so many aircraft and so much humanitarian aid coming in, some compared it to the Berlin Airlift [when aircraft landed] every three minutes," said Sergeant Craig. "In the first days we got here there were aircraft coming in every five minutes."

Landing aircraft is just one aspect of what combat controllers do. Once they talk to the pilot and the aircraft lands, the controllers need to find a place for

photo by Staff Sgt. Desiree N. Palacios





Air Force combat controllers controlled all air traffic into Toussaint L'Ouverture International Airport in Port-au-Prince, Haiti from a card table in the grass. The Airmen are from the 23rd Special Tactics Squadron at Hurlburt Field, Fla.

**Combat controllers
guide a C-17**

Globemaster III from Travis Air Force Base, Calif., onto the ramp at Toussaint L'Ouverture International Airport. The Airmen set up in the middle of the airfield until a portable control tower arrived to replace their card table.

photo by Staff Sgt. Desiree N. Palacios



it to park. This is no easy task when the aircraft are 747 jumbo jets and C-17 Globemaster IIIs and the airport has a single-runway as it did in Haiti. Despite these challenges, Sergeant Craig and his fellow combat controllers used every available square foot of concrete, and even some spots in the grass, to get the many aircraft lined up, ready for offload and then back into the air.

"It's a small airport and we've got so many aircraft coming in it's kind of hard to find the coordination between [radar approach control], who are the guys bringing them in [from where they are] holding, to the amount of space we have available here at the airport," said Sergeant Craig. "We're trying to put [aircraft] in the grass, utilizing as much space as we can in the airport."

Though it's difficult enough to find space for the familiar aircraft, Sergeant Craig and the other combat controllers must also find places for aircraft they've

never seen.

"We get birds in with types that we've never heard of," he said. "We have to ask them, 'what's your wingspan, what kind of a bird are you, how fast are you?'"

Though the combat controllers turned an airport that used to handle 30 flights a day into one that was handling more than 100, they were not a permanent force. The nature of the job was to set up airfield operations and move on once a more permanent tower was set up.

After more than a week of manning their folding tables, it was time for them to move on. The Kentucky Air National Guard set up and started operating a portable tower. Sergeant Craig and his fellow combat controllers ran through the routine that comprises most of their operations. They worked with the incoming air traffic controllers, divesting themselves of the operations they spent a week setting up.

"We're probably going to take no less than 96 hours [working with incoming

controllers]," said Sergeant Craig. "The first day we're going to do it and let them watch. The second day they're going to integrate a little bit. The third day we're going to let them do (it) and we're going to watch. The fourth day we're going to let them do it all and we're going to give them a hand if they need it."

While some combat controllers worked to transfer operations to the newly arrived controllers, others, like Staff Sgt. Donald Travo, worked with the Army's 82nd Airborne Division to set up delivery zones for potential aerial delivery missions. These missions are one of the quickest ways to get food and water to a needy populace; however, dropping supplies out of a C-17 requires finding a suitable location and very specific coordinates. Combat controllers are trained to determine both.

Instead of talking to aircraft from the ground, Sergeant Travo flew with Puerto Rico National Guard Blackhawk pilots looking for ideal delivery zones and if

suitable for aerial delivery, record their coordinates. But accessibility, recoverability and the absence of agriculture aren't easy to find around the city where farmland dots the countryside and the city lacks open areas large enough to drop supplies.

By talking over the radio with the helicopter pilots he was able to establish which locations had potential. Through this in-air conversation, Sergeant Travo could use the experience of the Blackhawk pilots to find and visit the most suitable locations. The helicopters then landed so Sergeant Travo could collect the coordinates needed to plan potential aerial delivery missions. However, each time the helicopters landed, dust thrown up by the rotors became a signal to the people that some sort of aid activity was happening. People swarmed the aircraft and Sergeant Travo and pleaded for aid in French, Creole, English or through gestures.

Sergeant Travo tried to tell them to wait, that he was enabling aerial delivery and aid would come, but the language barrier and helicopter noise barred any communication. Leaving hurting, sometimes-naked people with only the promise of a possible air delivery, Sergeant Travo boarded the Blackhawk to move on to the next location.

"I felt bad for the nation for what they were going through," Sergeant Travo said. "I wish we could have fed every one of them right there. It was hard to leave when they were crying for food but it felt good to know we would turn right around and bring supply drops to them."

Aid did come. Water, food and medical supplies made their way from around the world, aboard Air Force aircraft and others. That aid made it safely into Port-au-Prince to be distributed, sometimes drifting out of the sky. None of it would have been possible if not for controllers manning a folding table on an island amidst the chaos. 🐦

An aerial view shows Toussaint L'Ouverture International Airport in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. Aircraft from all over the world delivered humanitarian aid and evacuated people. Air traffic was so heavy that lighter aircraft were parked in grassy areas to clear paved parking for heavier planes.



DIGGING THROUGH THE RUBBLE

PJS FROM THE 23RD SPECIAL TACTICS SQUADRON WORK TO RESCUE EARTHQUAKE SURVIVORS

STORY BY RANDY ROUGHTON

Senior Airman Jason Humes maneuvered around bodies to reach a 25-year-old woman. She'd been trapped in the rubble of a Port-au-Prince university for seven days. He was one of four pararescuemen who took shifts talking to her and supplying her with fluids. Thirty-one hours later, Airman Humes and his teammates rejoiced as she was hoisted from the rubble. She sang as her backboard was extracted from the collapsed building while her rescuers cheered and clapped. It's one memory from his efforts in Haiti Airman Humes expects to cherish for a long time.

"I spent two hours in that hole," he said. "She was talking in French to us, and anytime you got around her to see where she was pinned, she'd grab you by the arm to thank you. She even kissed one guy on the neck. We were mainly monitoring her medically, making sure she was still alive and checking her level of alertness. We were switching IVs and getting medication into her while we were coming up with a plan to get her out. I don't think we would've gotten her out without the tools we brought to the table."

Airman Humes and other pararescuemen, called PJs, from the 23rd Special Tactics Squadron from Hurlburt Field, Fla., lived out their motto, "That Others May Live," in Haiti. They were sent to Haiti's capital city to set up a casualty collection point at the Toussiant L'Ouverture International Airport.

Once the casualty point was established, the PJs worked with the Fairfax County, Va., Task Force Urban Search and Rescue Team to find and rescue survivors.

"They didn't know what a PJ was until we told them what we do," said Master Sgt. Keith O'Grady, the lead pararescueman for relief operations in Haiti. "They said we're like four different team members for them – someone to make the hole, another to climb in the hole and medically stabilize the person and someone else to pull the person out and transport them."

The pararescuemen moved into Port-au-Prince at dawn with the Virginia task force. They took the special operations medical and surgical team to the U.S. Embassy in a Humvee and a trailer and helped transport seven critical patients.

For the next 36 hours, the teams worked in assigned areas to locate and rescue trapped survivors. By mid-afternoon, they'd rescued seven people from places like the Caribbean Market, Hotel Montana and a university in Port-au-Prince. A rescue can take eight hours, sometimes much longer.

"It's tedious, hard work, and really dangerous to climb in and out of these holes of collapsed buildings," Sergeant O'Grady said. "There were some pretty big buildings that collapsed. It was amazing that there could still be people alive in some of them."

PJs train annually for rescues like these. They've rescued a mannequin from a demolished fourplex and practiced going

through concrete with their tools. But nothing prepared them completely for Haiti.

"It prepares you for the techniques, but not for the mass-scale destruction we saw in Haiti," Airman Humes said.

Master Sgt. Paul McCarthy helped the 23rd STS PJs as a medical technician after follow-on medical forces arrived.

"Initially, we didn't do a lot of medical care just because we didn't have the resources and supplies," Sergeant McCarthy said. "We were mostly focused on search and rescue, trying to find people who were trapped, getting them out, providing whatever care we could for them and getting them sent somewhere that could give them more definitive care. It took quite a bit initially, not to try to go out and help everybody you saw because a lot of people needed help. We tried to stay focused on our mission."

Sergeant McCarthy assisted in transporting one woman after a 28-hour rescue. The woman had major crush injuries and dehydration, but her rescuers soon learned their efforts to save the woman's life were far from over.

"We did an hour-and-a-half transport to try to find a suitable location to transfer her to," Sergeant McCarthy said. "The Haitian hospital we took her to refused to accept her and doctors said she'd die if we left her. We provided care for her until we got her to the surgeons. The next day she was transferred to an American hospital in the

Dominican Republic, where I heard she's doing quite well.

"It was pretty rewarding, just to be able to get those people out of those buildings," he said. "Some of them were still in pretty good condition. We just had to get them rehydrated, treat their injuries and they were able to just walk away."

Rescuers saw much that was hard to deal with. In some cases, doctors had to amputate limbs before the person could be freed. But, what disturbed Airman Humes the most was working around the dead while trying to reach survivors.

"We could have four or five (bodies) in an area where we were trying to rescue someone," he said. "You didn't want to do anything that would compromise them, but you also had to be concerned with your safety and the person you were trying to save. We only came into contact with a body as a last resort. Dealing with the bodies during a rescue effort was probably one of the hardest things we saw in Haiti."

The PJs saw more than their share of misery. There were many they couldn't save. But there were uplifting moments, like the one shared with the world on international television of the marathon rescue at Port-au-Prince University.

Airman Humes said the thing he will always remember is how the survivors emerged from the rubble, singing and expressing their appreciation. 🕊



A rescue team saved a 25-year-old woman who was trapped in a collapsed building for seven days. The rescue took about 31 hours and involved the Fairfax County, Va., Task Force Urban Search and Rescue Team and pararescue Airmen from the 23rd Special Tactics Squadron from Hurlburt Field, Fla.

GATEWAY TO RELIEF

AIR FORCE AERIAL PORTERS

STORY BY STAFF SGT. J. PAUL CROXON



At Toussaint L'Ouverture International Airport in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, neat rows of pallets and cargo occupied the grassy area across from the terminal. Containers of food, water and other supplies arrived aboard civilian and military aircraft from across the globe but didn't remain at the airport long. The neat rows were more like lines where supplies waited their turn to be delivered to the hungry, thirsty and sick Haitian people still reeling from the earthquake.

Heavy pieces of equipment moved in and around the rows of supplies like giant ants. The operators carefully groomed the lines of supplies, organizing them, taking some containers to a larger cargo storage area run by the Army and filling holes in the lines. More supplies were plucked from the steady stream of military and civilian aircraft that also waited in line to land and offload.

The constant state of flux, confusing for many, became an exhilarating chance to help rebuild a nation for one Airman sent to Haiti on his first deployment. Airman 1st Class Daniel Werth, an aerial porter from McChord Air Force Base, Wash., saw the changing, yet organized nature of the improvised aerial port as just part of the job. He's accustomed to unloading and sorting cargo and Haiti was only a change in geography from what he trains to do every day.

With less than a year in the Air Force, the fact that he was supporting a major international and joint military humanitarian operation wasn't lost on him.

"It feels really good to me because I know a lot of people in worse places need help and I'm glad the military is doing it," he said about the work being done in Haiti. "A lot of people don't realize that we don't just fight wars, we also help a lot of people. [There are] a lot of occasions

where we come in and take care of other people from other countries."

Airman Werth's part in taking care of the people of Haiti meant unloading supplies as varied as the aircraft they came in on. Supplies sometimes came in neatly stacked on standard Air Force pallets aboard a C-17 Globemaster III, something Air Force aerial porters see every day, and sometimes they arrived loose and unorganized in non-military transports.

At times he and the other porters unloaded civilian aircraft full of supplies stacked loosely on the seats. They unloaded and palletized those items by hand before placing them in line with the rest. Sometimes it was the supplies themselves that were out of the ordinary.

"Today we unloaded about two thousand pounds of animal crackers, saltines and lots and lots of water," he said. "We've palletized about eight pallets of water. Just seeing it come off the aircraft, going to the

cargo yard and knowing that the Army is taking care of it and getting it to the people, is good to know."

Soldiers plucked supplies from the neat lines of pallets to be transported to a much larger yard east of the aerial port operations. The supplies then went to civilian aid agencies for final delivery to the people.

The ebb and flow of provisions was constant. Aircraft landed, were unloaded by the aerial port operators and the cargo was organized and palletized. Soldiers then took the material and it was replaced almost immediately by more incoming cargo. This kept Airman Werth and his team constantly busy.

The perpetually moving line of cargo never daunted the porters. Airman Werth said that helping deliver a seemingly never-ending line of relief supplies is what made this, for him, a meaningful first deployment. ♡



(Opposite page)

Airman 1st Class

Daniel Werth enjoyed the challenge of working with a constant flow of humanitarian cargo. He knew every pallet meant one more person would get food, water, medical supplies or other necessities soon.

Pallets of bottled

water filled a lot of space in the cargo area at Toussaint L'Ouverture International Airport in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. The pallets of supplies were staged and ready for Soldiers to pick up and distribute.

A GRAIN OF SAND

AN OFFICER AND HIS FRIENDS DO THEIR PART TO SAVE LIVES IN HAITI

STORY BY TECH. SGT. AMAANI LYLE

He took eight days of leave, \$57 worth of protein bars, some water, a couple of changes of clothes and set out to catch a last-minute flight to the Caribbean. Lt. Col. Greg Beeker was not headed for a tropical beach vacation and comfort wasn't his objective.

GETTING THERE

The air staff war mobilization plans and requirements officer wrestled with the idea of going to Port-au-Prince, Haiti. As part of the Pentagon's crisis action team, he saw the raw data that spoke of the death, disease and desperation caused by a magnitude 7.0 earthquake. He knew it had claimed more than 200,000 lives and left more than 3.5 million Haitians destitute and living in lawlessness.

So, when Colonel Beeker's friend, Loubna Starnes, said she'd volunteered at a mission in Cité Soleil, the poorest slum in Port-au-Prince, he was worried. He tried to convince the slight-framed woman not to go until the military established security. At the same time, he battled his own desire to serve.

"I wanted to help, but knowing the risks, I had to be cautious," Colonel Beeker said. "I started to get a real understanding of how bad things were a couple of days after the quake; without security

we couldn't take care of the people."

The information he learned as a member of the crisis action team confirmed that the earthquake sent conditions reeling from bad to worse.

"This was a nation that was already so impoverished," he said. "Even before the quake hit they had very limited resources."

As the reality of the nation's fate continued to unfold, the colonel reassessed his own hesitancy in traveling to Haiti to help while his friend prepared to leave.

He explained Starnes was traveling with Pastor Mark Dreibelbis, a friend of the family and a leader with the Famine Relief Foundation. The pastor was determined to help his staff. Two had lost family members in the quake. Those serving at the mission in Haiti needed help themselves now.

Aware of the quake-induced collapse of a large prison from which more than 300 prisoners had escaped, Colonel Beeker realized overnight what he had to do.

BEING THERE

Four hours after Dreibelbis' team left for Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, Colonel Beeker was on a flight to meet them. There, they obtained ground transport into Port-au-Prince. The next morning, the self-financed group hired a van and driver.

The eight-hour drive over dirt roads and potholes ended at a hotel that was already filled to capacity.

Making the best of the situation, the team camped out on folding chairs and inflatable mattresses on the hotel's outdoor pool deck.

"We were just grateful that the hotel provided security, showers and clean restrooms," Colonel Beeker said.

Though, they carried some food with them, the hotel also served hot meals and sandwiches, if the team returned in time. If not, the day's opportunity for food was lost.

"We missed lunch one day and ate only pistachios," Starnes said. "I didn't mind because many of the people who live in this area feel hunger every day."

The uncertainty of food seemed a welcome discomfort compared to what would happen next.

"I was so tired that I passed out and slept hard on the pool deck," Starnes said. "The next thing I remember, Colonel Beeker was dragging me by the ankles to wake me up and everything was shaking."

It wasn't a hotel wake-up call, but a magnitude 6.1 aftershock that triggered the team's first awakening.

"Colonel Beeker yelled, 'get up, get up!' as we all tried to run down the stairs to the front of the hotel," Starnes said.

Undeterred by the morning's

pandemonium, the weary and weather-beaten crew set out for the clinic along roads patrolled by U.S. Army Soldiers. A backdrop of squalor compounded the quake's devastation. Along the road to the clinic sat uneven dirt-floor shacks, cramped tin houses and ragged tents. Stagnant heat in the mid to high 80s amplified the stench of garbage and the sewage filled canal running through the area.

"There's no running water there, no sanitation," Colonel Beeker said. "You could even see people taking baths in the street with a pan of water. The 'bathrooms' are just right out in the street in front of everyone."

The emotional gut-checks continued as the team arrived to augment Haitian missionary Robinson Remedor and his staff. The range of injuries and subsequent infections from wounds left untreated for more than a week had a jarring effect on the team members.

"We saw children with deep gashes in their skulls, arms and legs, some were missing extremities," Colonel Beeker said. "All we really had to help alleviate the patients' agony was a local anesthetic as we used saline syringes, gauze pads and antibacterial ointments to clean the wounds."

Patients swarmed to the clinic as Colonel Beeker and his friends helped triage or transport some 2,500 infants, adults and

senior citizens that week. Colonel Beeker said he used his Air Force self-aid and buddy care training to clean and bandage wounds.

Each day they journeyed between the hotel and the clinic amidst rivaling gangs, gunfire, and desperate citizens wielding machetes along the roadside.

"We had three unarmed bodyguards working at the clinic who accompanied us wherever we went," Colonel Beeker said.

During their outreach in the Cité Soleil community clinic, he remembers stepping around remnants of cinderblock houses, human feces and pigs eating garbage as naked, shoeless children ran in the streets.

The colonel said despite countless stories of loss and pain, the singular sense of hope in the Haitians had a tremendous impact on him.

"I noticed the small things ... you'd see students sing, dress up as best they could and tote Bibles to church," he said. "There is an unbreakable spirit in so many of the people there."

"From a civilian perspective, I was so impressed with the effort that the military put forth," said Starnes, a Moroccan native who obtained U.S. citizenship in 2001. "As I stood next to the Air Force and Army members who helped feed the children, protect the people and return the city to some sense of normalcy, I said to myself, 'I am proud to be an American.'"

REMEMBERING AT HOME

The team continued to work until their planned departure.

"It was a long journey, but certainly worth it," said Colonel Beeker.

Once home, the images of Haiti continued to haunt him.

"I came home really upset because I wanted do more," he said. "The things we saw in one week they live every day and they don't get a break. Trying to help all the people in need there, you feel like a grain of sand on the beach." ♡

photo courtesy of Lt. Col. Greg Beeker



Small clinics operated all over Haiti after the quake. Lt. Col. Greg Beeker, a staff member at the Pentagon's Crisis Action Team, took leave and joined a friend in Haiti to help at one. He said his Air Force self aid and buddy care training was valuable there.

AIR FORCE MEDICAL

NO SHOWERS, NO BEDS, NO PROBLEM

STORY BY COLLEN MCGEE ✪ PHOTOS BY STAFF SGT. DESIREE N. PALACIOS

There was nowhere to get clean, no place for the team to sleep and nowhere for them to operate. For one pediatric neurosurgeon, the decision to volunteer for Operation Unified Relief didn't include thoughts of creature comforts.

Working with humanitarian issues, malnutrition, and helping these people through their darkest hours was the draw for Maj. (Dr.) Brian Faux, who is assigned to Wilford Hall Medical Center, Lackland, AFB, Texas. "Absolutely using our skills to the fullest," he said, inspired him to join the team of medics headed to the island nation of Haiti to assist in the aftermath of the earthquake.

When the call for volunteers went out, he answered within the hour, though it would be 11 days before the team arrived in-country. He described that wait was "irritating."

"The longer we waited, the more people who would die," said Dr. Faux.

Many others who participated in the international efforts also felt the frustration as time slipped away. The wait, however, was necessary to ensure support could get into the country. In the hours after the disaster, requirements were established, and the logistics of getting relief into Haiti began. Chief among these tasks was returning the airport at Port-au-Prince to operating capability.

After the airport was opened and provisions began pouring in, the team finally

made it to Haiti. Though the earthquake was over, chaos still reigned.

"There were no trees and everything was on fire," Dr. Faux said. "It was very loud. Chaos is the first thing I remember. The scene was just crazy. There were 5-10 fires going at any one time. They were burning ... everything."

In the midst of the mess, the Air Force medical team members had to find a place to employ their skills.

"It took them about a half day to figure out how to use us," Dr. Faux said about organizers on the ground.

For the first part of the trip, the team joined combat controllers and other medical professionals at the airport and readied critical patients for transport. Eventually, the University of Mississippi set up care at the airport and Dr. Faux and the rest of the Air Force team went to a new operating location.

"Things did settle down at the airfield," Dr. Faux said. "It was quite exciting. By the time we got to our site, our mission was established."

The mission was to operate a hospital that took patients and acted as the treatment facility between triage and the USNS Comfort.

Terminal Varreux, where they worked, was a part of the shipping port and Dr. Faux explained the site was chosen for its proximity to the Comfort and the security afforded by the location, not for its amenities.

"After the air evacuation days, we had no running water, no showers for 10 days," said Dr. Faux. "They had us on the ground with mosquito nets."

He said members of other services were beginning to tease him about being in the Air Force. Dr. Faux said they'd ask, "where's your golf course?" as a part of the sister-service ribbing. But the services pulled together to meet the needs of their Haitian patients. Eventually, the Air Force medical team had running water and the joint operation settled into a positive routine.

"We had Navy translators; we gave the Navy showers and they gave us security," said Dr. Faux.

He also said that it wasn't until he had a chance to get out to the Comfort that he was able to eat a meal that didn't come out of a brown plastic pouch.

The terminal, where the hospital grew, is located near Cite Soleil, a large shantytown in the Port-au-Prince metro area. Cite Soleil was already home to more than 200,000 people living in poverty. The quake only increased their desperation.

"You'd hear whistles and gunfire at night," said the doctor. "But the hospital site was separated from Cite Soleil by a bay and a barbed wire fence."

He said they felt pretty secure in spite of the fact that there were thousands of people desperately in need of the supplies the medical team had. The precariousness of

having necessities was highlighted each time a cargo ship made it into port. People, using anything that would float, tried to get to the ships or to the dock for the cargo.

But it was the desperate people inside Terminal Varreux who captured the hearts of team members.

"They'd tell us they'd rather die than be paralyzed because they would have to go back to their families useless," Dr. Faux said. "They'd actually cry when they had to leave; some literally hanging onto the door."

The lack of rehabilitation services was a huge issue for the Air Force medical providers.

"(There were) no wheelchairs or crutches and no way to use them in the rubble," he said.

With most of their patients' homes destroyed, discharging them was also a tough call.

"If it was discharge to a street corner, that wasn't acceptable to us," Dr. Faux said. "We would try to link them up with non-governmental aid groups."

Dr. Faux treated children and adults for neurological disorders.

"We were there to treat injuries caused by the quake," he said. "My patients were the exception."

Some of his patients had injuries sustained during the quake but others had ongoing conditions like epilepsy. Between specialty patients, he worked medical emergencies.

Many injuries should have been minor. Conditions in Haiti caused even simple

injuries to become life threatening.

Dr. Faux said one teenager was injured during the quake and lost the top section of his pinky finger. The injury became infected, the patient contracted tetanus and nearly died of an injury that could have been treated with clean water and antibiotic ointment.

By the time Dr. Faux left, the mission was winding down. Clean water systems were slowly being set up and other medical facilities were coming on line. But the danger to the people wasn't over.

"They are going to have huge issues when the rainy seasons starts," said Col. (Dr.) Mary Pelszynki, the 59th Maternal/Child Care Squadron commander and a member of the team deployed from Wilford Hall. "We experienced some rain while we were there and the mud is very thick and sticks to everything. My biggest concern is their lack of sanitation and potable water. They are going to see a lot of water-borne illnesses." 🐾



The medical team from Wilford Hall Medical Center, Lackland AFB, worked with volunteer organizations in Haiti to find their patients follow-up care. None of the Airmen wanted to discharge someone to a home that was no longer there.

AN EAR FOR THE PEOPLE

AIRMAN TRANSLATES FOR HAITI EVACUEES

STORY BY IAN CARRIER

Between Jan. 15 and Feb. 18, more than 4 million pounds of cargo moved in and out of Homestead Air Reserve Base, Fla. But the most valuable commodity wasn't flown out. It came in the form of 350 tons of personal baggage and the 4,577 passengers who owned it. These were the evacuees.

They were Americans living in Haiti, orphans heading to new families, tourists who had been vacationing at the time of the quake and patients who were evacuated for medical reasons. For inbound passengers, the base gymnasium was their first stop on American soil. It became a reception and processing center for evacuees.

To process incoming evacuees, customs and border protection agents, American Red Cross workers and members of the 482nd Fighter Wing set up a reception station. People were given cots and food while passports were checked and immigration paperwork was processed.

Before arriving at the base, most of the evacuees had been living on the street for days and many were injured. Finding out their needs was difficult because many spoke little or no English. This is where

Senior Airman Pierre Narcisse, from the 482nd Mission Support Squadron, found his niche. He, and several other Airmen at Homestead, served as volunteer translators.

Airman Narcisse was born in Haiti and speaks fluent Creole. He moved to the U.S. in 1993, but still has family living in Haiti. A few days after the earthquake, he was tasked to help with the immigration process. Translating was something he could do and it was personal.

"My family was fortunate, but friends in other neighborhoods weren't," he said. "It's very painful to hear."

During his 12- to 14-hour shifts, he helped Haitian-American evacuees understand the customs and immigration paperwork. Though the evacuees were American citizens, many had never set foot on U.S. soil and had never learned to speak English.

Airman Narcisse also spent a lot of time assisting the medical personnel as they questioned patients about their injuries and any symptoms they were experiencing. The translation was helpful to the medical staff too as he was able to make them active partners by helping them understand

the advice medical professionals wanted them to follow.

The medical team at the inprocessing center was mostly for minor conditions. People with severe traumatic injuries were immediately transferred to a nearby hospital.

Evacuees told him that they found it comforting to have someone they could speak to; they felt they, "had someone on the inside." His presence reassured them that their concerns were being heard.

Airman Narcisse was very quick to sing the praises of everyone else at the processing station, while modestly downplaying his own importance.

"My fellow Airmen did a great job," he said. "The Florida Department of Children and Families and the Red Cross ... did their best to make sure everyone had food and water and was comfortable."

In fact, the base dining facility went to a 24-hour operating schedule to accommodate the influx of evacuees.

"We've been running a 24-hour operation since Friday," said Master Sgt. Cleon McFarlane, the 482nd Services Squadron dining hall superintendent at Homestead.

"We've been making between 500 to

**WE HAVE TO BE STRONG
FOR THEM. YOU WISH
YOU COULD DO MORE
FOR THEM. YOU DO WHAT
YOU CAN AND WISH THEM
THE BEST. — AIRMAN NARCISSE**

800 box lunches a day and serving breakfast, lunch and dinner."

But Airman Narcisse said basic comforts couldn't take away all the sorrow these people were experiencing. He said he would go from person to person, while they were in the customs line, making conversation. He remembers asking one woman how her family was.

"What family?" she replied sadly.

Airman Narcisse said she told him how in 13 seconds the woman had lost 25 members of her family.

Sometimes just being an ear for people who have experienced great trauma is the best tool available to help deal with the experience.

"We have to be strong for them," said Airman Narcisse. "You wish you could do more for them. You do what you can and wish them the best." 🐦



Senior Airman James Jean, a member of the 92nd Fighter Squadron at Homestead Air Reserve Base, Fla., helped survivors from Haiti communicate with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents. Most of the survivors only spoke French or Creole, and needed help understanding the immigration process.



COMBAT CAMERA IN HAITI

PHOTOS BY
MASTER SGT.
JEREMY LOCK





photo by Staff Sgt. Desiree N. Palacios



AIRMAN

|||

|||||

AIRMAN

|||||

AIRMAN

|||

January 13

Military preps for broader Haiti relief mission

January 17

AFSOC Airmen save Haitian earthquake victim, land more than 600 aircraft on island

January 21

Homestead offers respite for Haiti earthquake victims

February 9

Keesler medical teams provide Haitian victim care

April 1

Air Force support to O.U.R. continues

Haiti Earthquake: January 12, 2010

January 14

Beale officials send Global Hawk to aid in Haiti earthquake relief efforts

January 18

AMC continues aid efforts; conducted C-17 air deliveries

January 27

Air Force medics evacuate critically ill

February 25

Haiti airport transitions, commercial flights begin

(Main) Widespread devastation was evident from the air in this image of Port-au-Prince, Haiti. Homes, businesses and most other structures were flattened by the catastrophic magnitude 7.0 earthquake. By Jan. 24 at least 52 aftershocks measuring 4.5 or greater had been recorded. More than 3 million people were affected by the quake.

(Left to Right) In downtown Port-au-Prince, makeshift shelters were erected in many open areas including this stadium in the aftermath of the devastating earthquake that struck the country, Jan. 12.

Earthquake-affected Haitian people stand in line for food and water supplied by relief workers during Operation Unified Response.

Displaced from their homes, citizens of Port-au-Prince built tents with sheets and blankets. Aid workers, including many U.S. military teams, made their way to the people in locations where the tents appeared, bringing food, water and medical assistance where possible.

The Presidential Palace was not immune to the devastation.

Homes and businesses were reduced to rubble that clogged the streets making delivery of relief items tough for military and civilian aid workers.

(Clockwise) Eighty-year-old Yvonne lies on a pad outside the General Hospital in Port-au-Prince. The hospital had to extend its treatment area into the courtyard because of the number of casualties.

U.S. citizens wait to be evacuated from Toussaint L'Ouverture International Airport in Port-au-Prince.

U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton met with the Haitian president to thank relief workers.

An older man is pressed against the side of a truck carrying food and water. As more and more people heard of the distribution, the crowd grew and people began pushing from the back.

The injuries most seen at clinics and hospitals across the country were due to crush wounds that later became infected. Injuries that should have been easy to treat became critical.





(Clockwise) Haitians stand in line for some earthquake relief (food and water) handed out by U.S. Army Soldiers from Charlie Company, 2nd Battalion, 325th Airborne Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, Fort Bragg, N.C., at the stadium in Port-au-Prince.

A C-17 Globemaster III crew from the 21st Airlift Squadron in Travis AFB, Calif., load a plane with earthquake relief supplies bound for Haiti.

A Haitian girl holds a Humanitarian Daily Ration pouch after a military distribution. More than 473,325 Humanitarian Daily Rations were distributed in the weeks after the quake.

Air Force Orthopedic Surgeon Maj. Thomas Salsbury deployed from the 96th Surgical Operations Squadron, Eglin AFB, Fla., screens earthquake patients at the University of Miami medical tents at the airport in Port-au-Prince. The doctors screened patients for medical evacuation.

St. Michael Hospital in Jacmel, Haiti was destroyed by the earthquake and began treating patients outside. More than 350 people lost their lives in the city of about 50,000.



SAMOAN TSUNAMI

STORY AND PHOTOS BY TECH. SGT. COHEN A. YOUNG

Hawaiian Air National Guardsman Tech. Sgt. Gloria Lafitaga was driving to work in Hawaii when she learned her hometown in American Samoa was hit by a magnitude 7.9 earthquake on September 29. A few hours later, newscasters announced that a tsunami, caused by the quake, sent 30-foot waves through the same area.

"I was devastated when I first heard the news because my family was there and I hadn't heard from them initially," said Sergeant Lafitaga, a member of the Hawaii Air National Guard's 154th Medical Group at Hickam Air Force Base, Hawaii. "My grandmother lives along the shoreline and I know that she doesn't walk so well. So, I was really relieved once I knew she and other family members were OK."

Her unit was called on to support American Samoa in a relief effort, and she was one of the first to volunteer.

"I was an instant volunteer and excited at the opportunity to give back," she said.

Even though she watched and listened to television and radio news reports before leaving; she had no idea what she was going to see once she arrived.

"When I arrived, I was nervous and didn't know what to expect or how I would react once I saw the destruction of the island," said Sergeant Latifaga.

The only thing she knew was that her team was needed.

Sergeant Latifaga is a member of an enhanced response force package team composed of a decontamination unit, a medical element and a search and extraction element. She is part of the medical element. Her unit is a quick response force that assesses damages and initiates response procedures.

The Hawaiian Army and Air National Guard arrived within a day of the disaster. Sergeant Lafitaga, along with the men and women of the 93rd Civil Support Team, Hawaiian Army National Guard and the 154th Medical Group, Air National Guard, hit the ground running.

Sergeant Lafitaga was greeted with hugs by her family and said she felt joy and relief.

Other members of the unit felt Sergeant Lafitaga's pain because she was part of their military family.

"When I heard the news, I thought of all of the people that had relatives there and I told my husband that I needed to go," said Tech Sgt. Kehaulani Lobetos of Ewa Beach, Hawaii.

During the five-day response mission to American Samoa, members of the Guard unit helped search for a missing 6-year-old boy and provided

basic medical care such as blood sugar level evaluations, treating minor pains, sprains and overall health assessments to 154 people.

"Being here, I found the real reason that I decided to get into the medical field; I got to help people in situations like this," said Sergeant Lafitaga. "I get to apply everything I do on paper or at weekend drill in an actual situation," she said. 🦋



(Top Left) Hawaii Air National Guardsmen from the 154th Medical Group, witnessed the devastation caused by the tsunami when they arrived to set up a clinic in a village church. Nothing, including this fishing boat, was left untouched.

Seas were once again calm after a tsunami wave made landfall in American Samoa.

(This Page) Soldiers and Airmen board an Air Force C-17 Globemaster III answering the call for humanitarian aid after the disaster in American Samoa. The relief effort was a joint operation and included active-duty, Guardsmen and Reservists.



(Clockwise) Air Force and U.S. Army personnel prepare to leave for America Samoa to support relief efforts after an earthquake caused a tsunami that severely damaged island villages.

Homes and businesses were left in ruins along the main road of Pago Pago, American Samoa after the tsunami.

An American Samoan man watched as workers tried to remove debris from a drainage area in Pago Pago after the tsunami.

Cleanup began quickly after the tsunami. Trash was burned as most of American Samoa was still reeling in the wake of the disaster.





(Clockwise from left) Tech. Sgt. Gloria Lafitaga checks the blood pressure of a American Samoan man at a clinic set up in a local church after the tsunami. The Hawaiian National Guardsman is originally from American Samoa, but now lives in Kunia, Hawaii.

Hawaii Air National Guardsman Senior Master Sgt. Angela Walls, from the 154th Medical Group, checks a boy who complained of pains in his abdomen.

Hawaii Air National Guardsmen share a light moment with residents of Fafatiua village, American Samoa. Several of the Guardsmen are originally from American Samoa and their ability to communicate with their patients went beyond words.

BEING HERE, I FOUND THE REAL REASON
THAT I DECIDED TO GET INTO
THE MEDICAL FIELD; I GOT TO HELP
PEOPLE IN SITUATIONS LIKE THIS — SERGEANT LATFITAGA

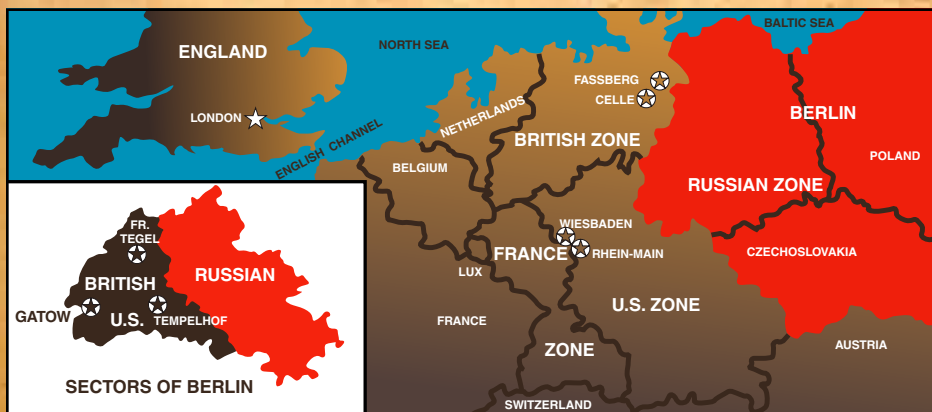
SALVATION FROM THE SKY

60 YEARS AGO THE FIRST AIRLIFT SAVED MILLIONS

STORY BY RANDY ROUGHTON

More than six decades separate two massive humanitarian operations supported by American Airmen. Each had different

levels of devastation, obstacles and reasons for the plight of the people in need. But both efforts shared the goal of helping another nation's citizens survive and the only route open for deliverance was through the air.



C-47 transport aircraft, each containing 190 sacks of flour, arrive at Tempelhof Airport, July 2, 1948. A pair of B-17 weather aircraft can be seen at the far side of the airfield along with a lone C-54 at the extreme right.



courtesy of The Harry S. Truman Library and Museum

Airmen recently helped in the humanitarian relief effort in earthquake-ravaged Haiti. About sixty years ago, there was another operation nicknamed, "The LeMay Coal and Feed Delivery System" in Germany. It was more widely known as the Berlin Airlift. The Air Force wasn't even a year old when the Cold War began three years after the end of World War II. The Soviet Union blocked the Allies' railway and road access to Berlin on June 24, 1948 to force acceptance for its plans for the future of Germany. The Berlin Airlift began two days later with U.S. Air Force C-47 Skytrains delivering milk, flour and medicine to West Berlin.

U.S. and British aircraft delivered more than 5,500 tons of supplies and 750,000 tons by the end of the year. Like Haiti 62 years later, the Berlin Airlift gave the young Air Force an opportunity to show how airpower can deliver more than bombs and missiles when needed. But unlike Haiti, the airlift called Operation Vittles by the Americans also had an important military objective – to prevent communism from spreading further in Western Europe, said a National Museum of the United States Air Force historian.

"It's tough to compare the two although both were humanitarian efforts," said Dr.

Jeffery S. Underwood. "The Berlin Airlift had not only humanitarian, but also geopolitical implications. Besides the humanitarian mission, it also showed the superiority of democracy over communism. We knew we had to win because if Berlin went down, the entire policy of containing communism would've been in jeopardy, from the end of World War II all the way to the dissolution of communism across Europe."

Underwood earned a doctorate in American history from Louisiana State University and is the author of a book about World War II-era airpower called "The Wings of Democracy: The Influence of Air Power on the Roosevelt Administration, 1933-41." The museum at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, also features an exhibit on the Berlin Airlift called "Berlin: City Held Hostage, 1948-1959: Humanitarian Triumph." Underwood believes both missions, although more than five decades apart, show the effectiveness of airpower in humanitarian relief operations and the compassion of Americans.

"They were both humanitarian missions that demonstrated an element of airpower that most people don't think about," he said. "It's hard for people to think of airlift as an aspect of airpower, but it's a significant part of what

the Air Force does. Both of these humanitarian missions illustrate the willingness of the American people to help others. We have the national will to help in Haiti, just like we had the will to help the people of West Berlin. I think this is a good indication that some things never change about Americans.”

The volume of supplies delivered in Haiti was comparable to the number brought to western Germany during the Berlin Airlift. More than 17,000 U.S. military members, along with 19 ships and 120 airplanes, helped deliver more than 3.5 million pounds of supplies in support of Operation Unified Response in the 17 days following the quake. As of Feb. 1, American aircraft had delivered more than 2.1 million bottles of water, 1.9 million food rations, 1.6 million pounds of bulk food and 104,000 pounds of medical supplies, according to statistics provided by the U.S. Southern Command.

During the Berlin Airlift, allied aircraft delivered more than 2 million tons of supplies on 278,228 flights in the 464-day operation. In one week in mid-March 1949, the Allies air delivered more than 45,500 tons of supplies into West Berlin. Two months later, the Soviets ended the blockade although the airlift continued through September. In another humanitarian airlift, Operation Provide Promise helped the people of Sarajevo in Bosnia and Herzegovina by delivering 179,910 tons from 1992 to 1997.

Pilots flying into Haiti had the advantage of considerably better weather than their Allied counterparts faced in Berlin. Like all pilots today, they also benefitted from technological advances in airplanes and navigational systems. But the aircrews in Haiti dealt with the disadvantage of having one airfield at the Port-au-Prince Airport, although a second airfield was later added 30 miles away in Jacmel to support Canadian humanitarian assistance. Berlin Airlift pilots started with two airfields, but the number increased to nine.

Despite being limited to one runway and having to establish air traffic control before planes could land in Haiti with supplies, the military coordinated 280 flights a day at an airport that normally handled between five and 15. A combat controller with the 23rd Special Tactics Squadron at Hurlburt Field, Fla., compared what was accomplished in Haiti with the success of the Berlin Airlift in an Air Force news television interview.

“We were able to gain control of the airfield and perform as admirably as the men did over a 12-day period,” said Chief Master Sgt. Tony Travis. “If you just count the fixed-wing arrivals and departures alone, we averaged one takeoff or landing every 5.3 minutes. If you filter in the rotary wing aircraft, we averaged one arrival or departure every 4.2 minutes. If you take that into context with the Berlin Airlift, where they were working off of three runways and taking in arrivals and departures every three minutes, it’s quite amazing the men were able to do that on a single runway and taxiway. That was a chokepoint.”

Airmen deploying to Haiti likely saw a different level of devastation than was in Berlin at the time of the airlift. World War II ended three years earlier, so reconstruction was well underway at the time of the Soviet blockade.

“In Berlin, the people at least had living arrangements, where in Haiti it was immediate, absolute devastation from the earthquake,” Underwood said. “The situation in Haiti was probably more like Berlin in 1945, as opposed to 1948. But both areas depended on outside support and it was crucial for us to get supplies into both places.”

One factor that separates the two humanitarian efforts, other than different eras, was the element of danger. Berlin Airlift pilots obviously flew with less advanced and dependable aircraft than their successors in Haiti. Second, they didn’t know whether Soviet pilots would actually fire on them. Even without direct hostile activity from the

photo courtesy Travis Air Force Base Museum



Soviets, 101 aviators were killed during the 464-day operation.

“If a pilot were to wander from the flight path in Haiti, he would be reminded to get back on course,” Underwood said. “If he got a little out of bounds in Berlin, he could get shot down. There was a much higher element of danger in Berlin because a mistake might have led to war.”

The largest advantage for pilots flying in support of a modern humanitarian mission is that there is little doubt they can succeed. Aircrews flying into Haiti knew they could because it had been done before. The Berlin Airlift was one of the first major tests for a newly independent Air Force, not to mention one of the first big showdowns between the East and West in the Cold War.

“The biggest lesson from the Berlin Airlift is that airlift can be sustained for any length of time that our national command authorities want to maintain it,” Underwood said. “It was

An Air Force C-54
Skymaster flies over a group of German children during the Berlin Airlift.

Staff Sgt. Kevin Cloyd rinses the nose art on a static C-47 Skytrain on display at the Berlin Airlift Memorial site of the former Rhein Main Air Base near Frankfurt International Airport in Germany. Sergeant Cloyd and a team of approximately 30 volunteers from Ramstein AB spent three days cleaning display aircraft in preparation for the Berlin Airlift 60th Anniversary Celebration. Sergeant Cloyd is an aircraft maintenance crew chief at Ramstein AB.

photo by Tech Sgt. Corey Clements



a great example of airpower being more than fixing a bomb on a target or a missile on an aircraft. People often don’t get to see much of what the Air Force does, but they can see a C-130 or C-17 going into a country, or air traffic controllers helping people.

“There were a lot of differences between Haiti and the Berlin Airlift, but the goal was the same – helping people survive. One was in the face of a natural catastrophe and the other was Communist aggression.”

STORY BY TECH. SGT. STEVE GERMAN ★ PHOTO BY STAFF SGT. DESIREE N. PALACIOS

I HAD TO BE THERE

It's not something you can learn by reading about it. It's something you can only learn by being there. I'm referring to teamwork and the emotional connections formed within that team. Nowhere have I seen it more, or in such global proportions, than on my latest mission.

As a broadcast journalist, I typically travel with a small team composed of a photojournalist, a print journalist and me. Most of the time we show up at an Air Force base with several assigned stories and everything is neatly scheduled. We meet with someone from the base public affairs office who helps us get around to interview the people for the stories. But that wasn't the case on our last mission.

Our assignment was to somehow get into Port-au-Prince, Haiti, and find stories on the earthquake relief effort. The four of us — we added a communications specialist — would have to overcome huge obstacles. We wouldn't have been able to do the job without the help of others. The Soldiers and Airmen of the Puerto Rico National Guard and Air National Guard made sure we got into Port-au-Prince and back out repeatedly. Folks back in San Antonio scrambled to replace my video camera that started eating tapes on the first day. But those weren't our only struggles — some played out internally. It's not something easily described. Just like teamwork, you can't just read about it and think you know. You have to feel it.

During this trip it was hard to keep track of what we were doing and where we were

heading next. It was like a whirlwind we couldn't slow down or escape from. In a flash we were on a helicopter headed into Port-au-Prince. Once we got there, we were back in the helicopter for a food relief mission.

I had to be there to feel what it was like to fly over a town full of hungry people, searching for a suitable landing site to deliver a load of food. The crew we were with found one but we had to leave those hungry people behind because there was no security for us there. Seeing the look on their faces that said to me, "Why are you leaving us?" is something I will never forget. I felt a level of sadness I've never experienced before. I wanted to be able to help offload the food for them. But when we left without doing that, I felt helpless. I felt an almost desperate need to somehow make a difference in some small way. All I could do was put my hand on the inside of the window as we flew off. Eventually, we delivered the food nearby.

The whirlwind we were riding didn't stop there. The next thing I knew we were heading into an orphanage, turned makeshift hospital, in the Dominican Republic capitol city of Jimani.



Tech. Sgt. Steve German is a broadcast journalist who traveled to Haiti and the Dominican Republic to cover the military's part in the earthquake relief effort. Sergeant German is assigned to the Defense Media Activity-San Antonio, Texas.

I'll never forget the eyes of those children. They were injured in the earthquake and some had to have limbs amputated. I heard stories from the doctors who had to choose between performing amputations without anesthesia or letting children die. They described the screams as unbearable.

I'll never forget one little boy whose leg was shattered and put back together with pins. He struggled with a walker to simply cross the dirt road for a drink of water. I can't say the little boy had no one to care for him, but the people there wanted him to get up and around. It looked like it was his first time trying to walk since having his leg rebuilt. He had a lot of encouragement.

Seeing his determined struggle really hit me. In fact, I've got video

of him and that scene keeps replaying in my mind. He actually had a smile on his face at one point. Now that I'm home, I often wonder what happened to that little boy. I never even knew his name.

As a journalist you have to separate yourself from the story. But, it's hard to separate from the emotions you feel when you see people, especially children, suffering.

There's a sense of innocence lost that is difficult to deal with when you see them doing the best they can under disastrous circumstances.

That's another thing that struck me: the inspiring, indomitable human spirit of the people. Some of these people, even after losing everything, actually found laughter in their situation.

Teamwork, cemented by emotion, will play a big part in how these people recover. From the doctors who saved lives, Sailors who loaded the helicopters with food and the combat controllers who kept the airport open, it all boils down to teamwork and caring about the mission.

I saw that played out within our own news team. We laughed and cried as a team. We experienced joy and pain together over the things we saw. On my next mission, the team will change. Different faces, different characters and different stories, but the teamwork will be there, secured by a connection that can only come through being there.



A man in a military flight suit and headset is shown in profile, looking at the instrument panel of an aircraft. The panel features several analog gauges and a row of toggle switches. The man is wearing glasses and a large, dark headset. The background is slightly blurred, showing the interior of the cockpit.

Airman

May 2010

ASIAN-PACIFIC AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

THE FINAL FRAME

FIRST CUT SAVES | photo by SENIOR AIRMAN TIFFANY TROJCA

A CHILEAN SURGICAL TECHNICIAN AND SENIOR AIRMAN ALEXANDER BALOK, A SURGICAL TECHNICIAN FROM THE 81ST MEDICAL SURGICAL SQUADRON AT KEESLER AIR FORCE BASE, MISS., REACH FOR INSTRUMENTS DURING THE FIRST SURGERY PERFORMED AT THE EXPEDITIONARY MEDICAL HOSPITAL IN ANGOL, CHILE. THE LOCAL HOSPITAL IN ANGOL WAS DEEMED STRUCTURALLY UNSOUND AFTER A MAGNITUDE 8.8 EARTHQUAKE OFF THE COAST OF THE MAULE REGION OF CHILE ON FEBRUARY 27. THE NEAREST SURGICAL WARD WAS MORE THAN 40 MILES AWAY AND LOCAL HOSPITALS WERE OVERWHELMED WITH CASUALTIES. THIS EXPEDITIONARY AIR FORCE HOSPITAL WAS SENT WHEN CHILEAN OFFICIALS REQUESTED HELP FROM U.S. FORCES TO INCREASE MEDICAL TREATMENT CAPABILITY.

Airman